

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 01/09/2009 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

2. The amendments, filed on 01/09/2009 and 02/13/2009, have been entered and made of record. Claims 1-2, 4-8, 10, and 14-20 are pending.

Examiner's Amendment

3. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mark Dodd on 02/13/2009.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 7 – page 4, please refer to the limitation regarding “an evaluation value calculation circuit”. Please change the 4th line, which is

“type of second chrominance signal, *an* evaluation value that indicates a relationship between”

to

“type of second chrominance signal, a first evaluation value that indicates a relationship between”.

Claim 14 – page 5, please change the 1st line which is

“The image-sensing apparatus as claimed in *claim 13*”

to

“The image-sensing apparatus as claimed in claim 7”.

Claim 18 – page 6, please refer to the limitation regarding “an evaluation value calculation circuit”. Please change the 4th line, which is

“type of second chrominance signal, *an* evaluation value that indicates a relationship between”

to

“type of second chrominance signal, a first evaluation value that indicates a relationship between”.

Allowable Subject Matter

4. **Claims 1-2, 4-8, 10, and 14-20** are allowed.
5. The following is an examiner’s statement of reasons for allowance:

Claim 1 is allowed because the prior art does not teach or fairly an image-sensing apparatus comprising: wherein the white balance circuit performs the white balance

processing by performing the different calculation operations in at least three brightness regions, namely the first region in which all types of chrominance signals represent the first characteristic, the second region in which all types of chrominance signals represent the second characteristic, and *a third region in which at least one of the different types of chrominance signals represents the first characteristic and at least one of the different types of chrominance signals represents the second characteristic, in combination with the other claimed elements.*

Claims 2 and 4-6 are allowed because they depend from claim 1.

Claim 7 is allowed because the prior art does not teach or fairly suggest an image-sensing apparatus comprising: an evaluation value calculation circuit that, assuming that one of the different types of chrominance signals is a first chrominance signal that serves as a reference and another of the different types of chrominance signals is a second chrominance signal, calculates, for each type of second chrominance signal, *a first evaluation value that indicates a relationship between a photoelectric conversion characteristic of the first chrominance signal and a photoelectric conversion characteristic of the second chrominance signal on a basis of a relationship between average values of the first and second chrominance signals respectively as varying with the first characteristic, calculating a second evaluation value on a basis of a relationship between average values of the first and second chrominance signals respectively as varying with the second characteristic, and adding together the first and second evaluation values with weights, in combination with the other claimed elements.*

Claims 8, 10 and 14-17 are allowed because they depend from claim 7.

Claim 18 is allowed because the prior art does not teach or fairly suggest an image-sensing apparatus comprising: an evaluation value calculation circuit that, assuming that one of the different types of chrominance signals is a first chrominance signal that serves as a reference and another of the different types of chrominance signals is a second chrominance signal, calculates, for each type of second chrominance signal, *a first evaluation value that indicates a relationship between a photoelectric conversion characteristic of the first chrominance signal and a photoelectric conversion characteristic of the second chrominance signal on a basis of a relationship between average values of the first and second chrominance signals respectively as varying with the first characteristic, calculating a second evaluation value on a basis of a relationship between average values of the first and second chrominance signals respectively as varying with the second characteristic, and adding together the first and second evaluation values with weights, in combination with the other claimed elements.*

Claims 19 and 20 are allowed because they depend from claim 18.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled “Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance.”

Conclusion

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Nakamura (US 2002/0021121 A1) A solid-state image sensing apparatus in which a first signal converted linearly to the intensity of incident light, and a second signal converted logarithmically to the intensity of light, can be processed by a common circuit after undergoing a predetermined signal processing.

Hagihara (US 6770861) An image sensing device with a white balance circuit which adjusts the white balance of logarithmic color signals.

Nakamura (US 7061529) A solid-state image sensing apparatus in which a first signal converted linearly to the intensity of incident light, and a second signal converted logarithmically to the intensity of light, can be processed by a common circuit after undergoing a predetermined signal processing.

Takada et al. (US 6927884) A solid state image pickup device that switches from linear converted signals to logarithmic converted signals.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Carramah J. Quiett whose telephone number is (571)272-7316. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00-5:00 M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Ometz can be reached on (571) 272-7593. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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/C. J. Q./
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